



JON ERPENBACH

STATE SENATOR

TO: Members of the Assembly Urban and Local Affairs Committee
FR: Senator Jon Erpenbach
RE: Senate Bill 507, relating to privacy of records and flat filing fees

Since I was elected to the Senate in 1998, I have worked on issues relating to privacy of personal information. An important way to improve this privacy is through the treatment of records held by governing bodies at all levels. Older records held by the county Register of Deeds are going online; these older records should be redacted so that consumer's social security numbers are not accessible online. Records filed after 2005 do not have social security numbers on them because of a previous law change. Redacting older records is a cost to county governments.

While exploring ways to pay for this privacy initiative, I was contacted by the Register of Deeds Association who had been working with the Wisconsin Realtors Association and the Land Information Officers to create a flat fee for the filing of all records in an effort to make more information available online to strengthen real estate transactions.

The bill creates a flat fee of \$25 to file records – with an additional \$5 for redaction of records put online. Once the county has completed redaction of older records the \$5 fee will sunset – the fee will sunset automatically on January 1, 2012 unless an extension is granted by DOA annually until January 1, 2015 the last day the extra \$5 may be collected.

The amendment to this bill addressed nearly every concern from the groups that are involved with the bill.

I hope I can count on your support for SB 507. Please let me know if you have any questions on the issues or the bill.